

NEWS AND NOTES OF PLAYS AND PLAYERS

Plays Pushed Into Success By Modern Methods

The free, open-handed, wasteful days are no more. Efficiency and conservation have risen to curb our fine recklessness, and the latest modern discovery, hypodermics, completes our abatement to thrift. The theory of hypodermics would seem to be to make out of something you didn't want something you didn't know you wanted. A fresh train of hypodermics is created in each process—and the complexities of modern life stretch themselves out illimitably.

The spirit of the theatre is not really disposed to these modern gods, but with the day of efficiency and organization upon us it has succumbed—thereby sacrificing a good deal of romance, but gaining increased reputation for being a safe, reliable, accredited business. Even with the loose methods of the theatre tightened there still remained regrettable (from the business standpoint) waste products, due to its inherently adventurous nature, which requires a manager to stake large investments against so hazardous a thing as public favor. The sea of popularity holds its own mysteries. A manager might follow all the signs that promised a safe port and yet go upon the rocks. But a large element of this risk is now removed by the turning to account of a former waste product of the theatre.

That waste product is empty seats. In the bright pre-efficient days an artless manager could do no better with empty seats than give them away in large handfuls until the show which public favor had rejected could gather itself up for a decent exit. Large sums of tickets bestowed on stores and factories, shopkeepers were liberally rewarded for window displays, and by one device or another the house was "dressed." Whereupon arose a shrewd and cunning brood who said, "This show may not be worth \$2, but cut the price in half and who can resist a bargain?" Of course it would injure the dignity of the house to have its seats reduced at the box office, but give us the tickets and we will dispose of them for you." But the managers were obtuse. They did not see that the value of empty seats was fictitious. Lacking sanction, a thriving business sprang up notwithstanding, conducted by those who paraded in the free passes for a trifling sum and sold them at a fraction of their box office value.

It was Joe Leblang, one of the swift and surest of the hunters of the "free pass," who had the acumen to see the wastefulness of operating this as a guerrilla business. He began the organized utilization of this byproduct of the theatre, and much cash and dignity have since accrued to him thereby. In the basement of Gray's Drug Store he now conducts a business in cut-rate tickets that yields more influence on the theatre than all the drama societies and critics and literati can ever hope to bring to bear. As far as the destinies of the theatre can be controlled his business controls it.

He began by pointing out to a few managers some elementary facts. Every manager was acquainted with the depressing psychological effect of a half-filled house on actors and audience. Leblang asked only to be allowed to sell those seats left unsold at the box office. Whatever these seats brought in could be counted pure gain. Even this reduced income might serve to keep the play alive a little longer. The length of its stay in New York was very important to its success on the road. And this was Mr. Leblang's trump card—a play that had started badly might, by patiently forcing its run with cut-rate tickets, gather momentum as it went and come in a winner. Clear as the logic of these arguments was, he could persuade only a few managers at first to let him handle their unsalable seats.

Joe Leblang started his business twenty-five years ago in a little store on Sixth Avenue. All the plays in New York that are not selling out at their box offices are now listed on his exchange. And Mr. Leblang is now a potent and portentous figure at first nights. He has proved over and over again his power to make a play successful through that large, indecisive, unclassified clientele of his which asks a night's entertainment of him and does not quarrel with what it gets because it has got it for half price. His judgment is a trifle more valuable to managers and producers than that of the critics, because he has been known to push plays into success that have been unfavorably reviewed, while good reviews do not always guarantee a box office success.

Although all the plays in New York are impartially listed on his exchange, Mr. Leblang has it in his power to urge one play a trifle more than another. There is no unscrupulous advantage in this. The helpless amusement seeker begs for advice at the counter, and Mr. Leblang through his clerk exerts his best judgment in his behalf. It is this influence which often transforms a play handicapped by adverse criticism into a success so great that it is finally withdrawn from the cut-rate racks. Mr. Leblang watches its departure with equanimity. He knows that many more plays are waiting to take its place.

The processes by which Mr. Leblang arrives at his judgment are simple. He is himself of that large class from which his clientele is mainly recruited—the class that knows what it likes. It likes a "strong" play or a good musical show best. In between these, if Mr. Leblang has a preference, it can be urged to take anything. Mr. Leblang asserts he never urges anything he himself does not like. It would not be

Who's Who in Current Plays

Christine Norman, who plays the rôle of the neglected wife in "The Crowded Hour," went on the stage, originally, merely for the purpose of enabling her to secure a musical education.

Miss Norman was living in Paris when her voice attracted the attention of a number of persons, and she was urged to study for the opera. She had just arranged to do so, when financial reverses in the family forced her to abandon the plan.

Shortly afterward Miss Norman returned to America with her parents. The idea of putting her voice to practical use, abandoned for the moment, was still strong in her mind. The only thing that stood in the way was the needed money for a vocal education. To get it, Miss Norman thought of the stage. She enrolled in a dramatic school, and her work in a play, given by the pupils at the end of her first year, was so above the ordinary that Will Dean, a manager for David Belasco, who saw the production, offered her an engagement in "The Warrens of Virginia." She followed Charlotte Walker in the play when it went on the road.

Miss Norman still clings to the hope that some day she will make both a name and a fortune as a singer, but theatrical managers seem insistent that she shall achieve both results on the dramatic stage. Following her first engagement, Miss Norman played in Bernstein's "Israel." Following that, she had important rôles in "The Bird of Paradise," "The Aviator," "Upstairs and Down," "Our Children," "Peg of My Heart" and, of course, "The Unconscious Woman," in which she scored one of the real hits of her career.

In both the last named play and "The Crowded Hour" Miss Norman's parts are rather similar. So neglected has she been in her recent stage experiences, Miss Norman confesses she is getting rather anxious to have a part where some man falls desperately in love with her. She says she might even think of trying a vampire rôle, just to convince herself she hasn't entirely forgotten how to handle the "unfair sex."

Little Marie Callahan, the four-foot high, eighty-seven pound heavy but of dainty femininity whose acrobatic dancing with Harland Dixon in the third act of Charles Dillingham's "The Canary" at the Globe is one of the most amusing features of that performance, has appeared before New York audiences before this—and yet has not been seen before this by a New York audience. She danced every week night and two afternoons on the stage of the Globe in "Chin Chin" and of the thousands upon thousands of persons who enjoyed her performance not one of them confronting her on the street ten minutes later could have identified her for the excellent reason that she was one of the little beauties whose antics in the toy shop in the first act were so genuinely amusing. And whenever she was on the stage she was completely enveloped in the baby bruin costume. It was the ex-

position of her unusual ability in that part which led to her selection to be Dixon's dancing partner when Doyle and Dixon succeeded to the parts Montgomery and Stone played here that explains her presence in the big cast of the latest Dillingham offering.

H. Cooper Cliff, who plays a prominent part in "The Invisible Man," the Thomas Dixon production now playing at the Harris Theatre, comes of old theatrical stock. His father was an actor and manager. His mother was a Kombe, a direct descendant of the Siddons, and well-known on the English stage as an interpreter of Shakespearean rôles. Mr. Cliff was trained for opera, studying the violin, singing, fencing, dancing and began his stage career as a violinist, followed by engagements in Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Before coming to America he played three years at the Drury Lane Theatre with Henry Irving. His first Broadway engagement was with William Faversham in "The Squaw Man." Following this he played many well known rôles, including the light comic villain in "The Intruder," the humorous, mystic Nobody in "Everywoman," and a leading part in last year's "Seven Days' Leave."

Mr. Cliff, who plays the doctor in Walter Hackett's psychic play, says that it is a relief to play an agreeable part, as he has, in his long and varied career, played so many villainous parts on both stage and screen.

"Whenever I hear a fat man say no one loves him, or a pretty girl bemoaning her fate about her beauty being a detriment to her ambitions to act, because managers refuse to give her the opportunity to do more than present an attractive picture," says Dallas Welford, the funny English waiter, now appearing in "Keep It to Yourself" at the Thirty-ninth Street Theatre, "I smile to myself a little smile, and go my way wondering what would happen to the fat man's disposition and the pretty girl's pique."

Last Thursday was the worst of all. It was raining! and then on our breakfast tray lay a nice, blue, interesting envelope postmarked Philadelphia. We opened it, and it was a wonderful letter from some one who had taken the trouble to find out our home (in a manner of speaking) address, and full of "we read all you write" and "can hardly wait till Sunday" and a lot of other nice things, and then it said, "When are you going to interview Nora Bayes? Please do her, for we think that she is a peach."

And, as we love to oblige people who say such pleasant things to us and as we love to write about Nora Bayes, and as we had her scheduled for this week anyway, we are doing it. Some time ago we went to see Miss Bayes in "Ladies First." "How did you like it?" said the person who always asks our opinion, seriously. "Splendid," we answered. "But isn't it all Nora Bayes?" he asked.

"Yes, thank goodness," we answered. "We, for one, can't get too much of Nora Bayes, and we were sure she was going to be just as chummy and confidential as she is on. She was. Mike, the nicest little press agent that ever wore a sailor's uniform, took us to the door of the dressing room and introduced us, through the crack.

"Lady come in, man stay out," said a voice slightly muffled in cold cream. Fancying that perhaps she meant us, we went in, and then we saw why the prohibition. Miss Bayes didn't have on her golden transformation which she wears as Betty Burt. Also she didn't have on some other things which Betty wears in the first act.

"Hello!" said Nora, just as though she had known us always. "Sit down. No, you can't. There is only one chair and I'm sitting on it. Have to make up! Late, as usual! Take off your coat. Nancy, hang up the coat. I love your frock! Who made it? I'm so glad you had silver in it instead of gold. No one ever wears clothes well unless they love them. I love them. Don't you?"

"Yes," we answered. "Especially yours in this play. Oh, may we see that Lucile thing you wear in the first act?"

"Which one?" said Miss Bayes, branzily. "Which one?" we echoed, reproachfully. "How many Lucile first-act gowns have you?"

"Oh, a half dozen or so. You see, I get tired of wearing the same one all the time." How maddening!

"That's rather nice, I think. It's new. Nancy, take down the blue one." It was a gorgeous affair of cornflower blue chiffon velvet, with bright green and soft pink dabs on it where you didn't expect them. Next to it hung a wonderful watermelon pink chiffon, and then came our choice of the lot—a sheer white organdie with baby Irish lace, made over pink erpe with blue ribbons and festoons of rosebuds and forget-me-nots.

And there were hats and fans and slippers to go with each one. And it didn't seem a bit fair. If Miss Bayes had been a bit less nice we should have hated her. But you couldn't hate Miss Bayes.

And in the twinkling of an eyelash she was ready and it was her turn to go on and announce her engagement to Irving Fisher. But first she introduced every one in the company.

Helen Montrose is a delightful person. In fact, she is twice as nice as any one else, because there is twice as much of her.

We asked her where she got the idea for her dance, which she does with poor Mr. Ebb Smith.

"I'll tell you," she said, seriously. "I once saw some cows trying to be cute out in a pasture. And one of them looked like me. If ever I get a chance to do a dance I shall pattern it after the sportive grace of that mild-eyed bovine," said I to myself. So I did."

Here Miss Bayes was right in the midst of "Without You" with Mr. Fisher, and it didn't look as though she was going to leave him. So we went back into the dressing room and, closing our eyes to the beauties of chinchilla and Russian sable and broad-tail, we let Nancy put us into our own simple caracul coat, trimmed with the fur of the humble skunk, then buttoned it over an honest heart and Nancy took us to the iron door and turned us loose in the theatre.

And as we went down in the elevator our spirits rose. "Well, anyway," we said, "she has to work every night and we have to work only Thursday nights. The rest is play—like this."

Ten Reasons Why We Like to Interview Nora Bayes

By Harriette Underhill

Thursday mornings are hateful mornings because they precede Thursdays, which are hateful days whenever any one is planning a good time and says "How about Thursday?" We always snap back "Oh, no, not Thursday! That is work day."

All of which proves that nothing is perfect this side of the great divide—not even a job in The Tribune dramatic department.

Now, as a matter of fact, we love everything about newspaper work except the writing. And Thursdays being the day when we do that, Thursdays are our bete noirs. Of course, you don't have to leave it all till Thursday. There is no law which says it may not be spread over the whole week, but Thursday being the dead line, every one leaves it all until Thursday. Excepting the boss. He does his on Friday.

Oh, yes! This is a well constructed article and we are getting somewhere. We are about to write a perfectly ripping interview with Nora Bayes. But, as we were saying, Thursday mornings are awful. Our dreams of the late morning are laden with a horrible impending something which a little later takes form and becomes a bushel of unopened mail and six or eight or ten chatty stories to write.

Last Thursday was the worst of all. It was raining! and then on our breakfast tray lay a nice, blue, interesting envelope postmarked Philadelphia. We opened it, and it was a wonderful letter from some one who had taken the trouble to find out our home (in a manner of speaking) address, and full of "we read all you write" and "can hardly wait till Sunday" and a lot of other nice things, and then it said, "When are you going to interview Nora Bayes? Please do her, for we think that she is a peach."

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AMUSEMENTS

AMERICA'S FOREMOST THEATRES AND HITS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF LEE AND J. J. SHUBERT

WINTER GARDEN Broadway and 50th St. Phone Circle 2300. Mat. Tues., Thurs. & Sat., 2.30. Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 7.15. LEE & J. J. SHUBERT Present. AL JOLSON in a Licholous Satire of Laughter SINBAD TO-NIGHT SUNDAY CONCERT TO-NIGHT 14—A BUTTON BURSTING BILL—14 BIG FEATURE ACTS	MANHATTAN Opera House, 34th, West of Broadway. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. Morris Galt. A. H. Woods, in conjunction with Mossy Shubert, announces the FAREWELL Appearance in America. of England's MARJORIE RAMBEAU The best known Star in her favorite rôle EYES OF YOUTH By Max March and Charles Gaumont 25c to \$1.00. Mat. Thurs. & Sat. 2.30.
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VANDERBILT 48 E. 42nd St. Phone Broadway 154. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. Need of More Sentiment Capacity. The Season's Surprise Comedy. A LITTLE JOURNEY By Rachel Crothers, with Ebb Smith. Will Move Here To-morrow Night.	COMEDY 41 E. 42nd St. Phone Broadway 2304. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "It is welcome and well received." —Ludie DeLoe, World. 25c to \$1.00. Mat. Thurs. & Sat. 2.30. Edward Locke's Comedy. That Never Will Grow Old.
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BROADHURST 44 W. 42nd St. Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "Goes of Laughter." —Alan Dale, Tribune. THE MELTING OF MOLLY With CHARLES PERCELL FRANKLIN LOANE And a Charming Little Play	44TH ST. 44th St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 720. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. The Tunes of the Town. LITTLE SIMPLICITY With Walter Catlett Carolyn Thomson And ONE SUCH GIRL
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BELMONT 48 E. 42nd St. Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. Most Important Play in N.Y. 34th Month of the Big Success. WALKER WHITEHEAD IN THE LITTLE BROTHER With TYRON POWER "Powerful, timely, significant." —Ludie DeLoe, World.	BIJOU 40th St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. H. H. Munro's Story. H.B. WARNER "SLEEPING PARTNERS" BORDOM "Work of genuine freshness and persistent effectiveness." —World.
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PRINCESS 47th St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 812. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "A SPARKLING MEDLEY OF FUN AND MUSIC." OH MY DEAR A SPARKLING MEDLEY OF FUN AND MUSIC	39TH ST. 39th St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. GEORGE BROADHURST Presents. THE LAUGH HIT BY MARK SWAN with EDWIN SANDER. "Rarely does one see an audience so convulsed by laughter." —S. Jay Kaufman, Globe. Seats Now for Lincoln's & Walden's Boxes.
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John Barrymore in Tolstoy's Redemption Plymouth West 45th St. Mat. Wed. and Sat. 2.30. Friday, 7.15. P. M. SUNDAY, 10.30 A. M. WALTER HAMPTON "Hearts the unique event of the dramatic year." —Ludie V. DeLoe, World. HAMLET SEATS 4 WEEKS AHEAD	FULTON 15th St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "The Dramatic Triumph of the Season!" KALCH IN THE RIDDLE? WOMAN With A. E. ANSON CHRYSTAL HENNE LEE BAKER ALBERT BRUNING
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ASTOR 47th St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 812. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "The unique event of the dramatic year." —Ludie V. DeLoe, World. EAST With FAY BANTER By Samuel Shipman and John B. Hymer.	SHUBERT-RIVIERA 67th Street and Broadway Direction Lee and J. J. Shubert. Mat. Tues. & Thurs. (Best Seats 50c) and Sat. 2.30. Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 7.15. BEGINNING TO-MORROW NIGHT JOHN B. WILKINS presents "The Comedy of Lure" A GREAT POPULAR PROGRAM Tickets \$1, \$1.50, \$2. On Sale To-morrow at Hippodrome Box Office. Management, CHAS. L. WAGNER. D. F. McSWINEY, Assoc. Manager.
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LOEW'S 7TH AVE. 7th Ave. and Broadway Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. BEGINNING TO-MORROW NIGHT A. WOODS presents THE BUSINESS BEFORE PLEASURE One Year At The Filling Theatre	NORA BAYES THEATRE 44th St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "The unique event of the dramatic year." —Ludie V. DeLoe, World. NORA BAYES In Her Juvenile Musical Play LADIES FIRST PLETTY GIRLS ANNY SONGS CATCHY MUSIC HEAPS OF FUN Nifty Concert To-night at 8:30 NORA BAYES with a Great Bill of 12 Headliners
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LOEW'S NEW YORK THEATRE 42nd St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "The unique event of the dramatic year." —Ludie V. DeLoe, World. ROSELAND GIRLS with SALLY WARD 25c to \$1.00. Mat. Thurs. & Sat. 2.30.	LOEW'S NEW YORK THEATRE 42nd St. and Broadway Phone Broadway 419. Mat. Wed. & Sat. 2.30. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 7.15. "The unique event of the dramatic year." —Ludie V. DeLoe, World. ROSELAND GIRLS with SALLY WARD 25c to \$1.00. Mat. Thurs. & Sat. 2.30.
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NORA BAYES
In "Ladies First"

If each had been visited with the homeliness I have been forced to endure ever since I was born.

"Ain't it blighty to be homely?" "However, while I do not rant at fate—at least, openly—for having played me such a shabby trick, at times I do wonder why I am so homely, especially when my mother, Annie Baldwin, a well-known leading woman on the London stage years ago, was such an extremely beautiful woman.

"Ah, fate, I am as I am; five feet one inch in height, and perhaps the homeliest actor on the stage, either in England or America.

"And the discouraging part of it is that never but once have I been selected for a part because of my homeliness. In fact, my looks have been a detriment, except—and I say it with thanksgiving—in farce.

"In drama it was always my unholy luck to have an 'entrance' in a scene where laughter was what they did not want. And when I did manage to secure a part and get to the opening night, my homely face would get a laugh. And the next morning some one else was rehearsing in my place.

"And, mind you, I did not 'mug.' I just looked 'natural.' "So I swore off doing anything but farce; and, outside of one or two slips, I have attempted to live up to my promise to myself."

"A Little Journey" Moves
 Rachel Crothers' comedy, "A Little Journey," moves to the Vanderbilt Theatre Monday evening from the Little Theatre, from which house it has been compelled to withdraw owing to the limited seating capacity. The engagement at the Vanderbilt will be of an indefinite period.

AMUSEMENTS
 RIVERSIDE
 Mat. ALL STAR BILL. Eve.
 2.00 Overture 8.00
 2.05 Riverside News Pictorial 8.05
 2.12 Bert & Lottie Walton 8.12
 2.24 BAILEY & COWAN 8.24
 2.40 Stephens & Hollister 8.40
 2.50 JIMMIE HUSSEY & Co. 8.50
 3.11 EDDIE LEONARD & Co. 9.11
 3.44 Lenberg's Harmonists 9.44
 3.54 RUTH ST. DENIS 9.54
 4.22 ADELE ROWLAND 10.22
 4.44 AVON COMEDY FOUR 10.44
 5.01 Exit March 11.01

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 2.00 to 5.00
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 SOLOISTS
 ANNA FITZGERALD Soprano
 ALESSANDRO DOLCI Tenor
 OCTAVIA T. T. Tenor
 RICCARDO STACCATI Harp
 MARCEL MINET Bass
 RIGOLLO LAZZARI Harp
 Conductors: Campanini, Polacco, Huesmann, Frivier.
 A GREAT POPULAR PROGRAM
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 D. F. McSWINEY, Assoc. Manager.

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 THE LAUGHING SUCCESS OF NEW YORK
 OLIVER MOROSCO presents
WILLIAM COURTENAY
 AND
WIS E
 IN E.E. ROSE NEW COMEDY
CAPPY RICKS
 (From Peter B. Kyne's Pop. Sat. Eve. Pool Stories)

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WM. COLLIER
 IN
"NOTHING BUT LIES"

Last Week
 Maeterlinck's
"Betrothal"
 Shubert Theatre

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MONDAY, FEB. 3 SEATS 75c TO \$1.00
"GOOD MORNING JUDGE"
 GEORGE HANSELL MOLLY KING CHARLES KING